REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Office Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-18, 20, and 22-38 are now pending in this application, with Claims 1, 9, 22, and 30 being independent. All pending claims have been amended herein. Claims 19 and 21 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Initially, Applicants appreciate the indication that documents cited in the prior Information Disclosure Statements were considered by the Examiner. However, with regard to the Information Disclosure Statement filed June 30, 2003, the Examiner initialed the first page of that filing and did not initial the Form PTO-1449 provided therewith. Since two additional U.S. patents were cited in the Form PTO-1449 and were not cited on the first page of the filing, it is respectfully requested that that Form PTO-1449 be initialed and returned indicating that all documents have been considered. Favorable consideration is requested.

Claims 18-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, Applicants have cancelled Claims 19 and 21 and amended Claims 18 and 20 along the lines suggested by the Examiner. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 101 rejection are requested.

Claims 1, 9, 22, and 30 were rejected under obviousness-type double patenting over Claims 1 and 14 of U.S. Patent No. 6,665,446 (Kato). This rejection is traversed.

With the present invention, it is not necessary to create a new block for

recognizing an image area of interest, and therefore it is possible to extract pixels in a recognized image area of interest so as to put a small load on a processing unit, because the acquired spatial frequency information and chromaticity information acquired from the compressed image data are used in recognizing the image area of interest.

Claims 1 and 14 of Kato recite converting input digital image data into coefficients, extracting a specific area from a converted image by pattern matching between an area having a predetermined color component value range and a predetermined shape, and performing quantization processing on the conversion coefficients while changing a quantization characteristic in accordance with the extracted specific area. Referring to a specific embodiment described in Kato, image data is converted into YUV color space and wavelet conversion is performed on U and V components to obtain the conversion coefficients. Using the conversion coefficients, a face area can be extracted. Quantization processing is performed on the conversion coefficient while changing the quantization value in the face area or another area. That is, Kato uses wavelet conversion coefficients to recognize the image area of interest, but does not use acquired spatial frequency information and chromaticity information acquired from compressed image data through a process of reconstructing decompressed image data from the compressed image data.

Therefore, the claims and disclosure of Kato fail to disclose or suggest at least a method or apparatus that recognizes an image area of interest from compressed image data through a process of reconstructing decompressed image data from the compressed image data, acquiring spatial frequency information and chromaticity information for respective

predetermined blocks from the compressed image data, and searching for an image area of interest from the compressed image data using the acquired spatial frequency and chromaticity information, as is recited in independent Claims 1 and 22. Nor does Kato disclose or suggest at least a method or apparatus that recognizes an image area of interest from compressed image data and decodes image data from the decompressed image data through a process for reconstructing decompressed image data from the compressed image data, and recognizing an image area of interest, including acquiring spatial frequency information and chromaticity information for respective predetermined blocks from the compressed image data, and searching for the image area of interest from the compressed image data using the acquired spatial frequency information and chromaticity information, as is recited in independent Claims 9 and 30.

Accordingly, Kato fails to claim, disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in the independent claims.

Thus, Claim 1, 9, 22, and 30 are patentable over the citations of record.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1, 9, 22, and 30. Dependent Claims 2-8, 10-18, 20, 23-29, and 31-38 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office

Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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